



Catherine E. Pugh  
Mayor

## COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

February 12, 2019

**REQUEST:** Demolition Hearing One – Determination of Architectural Significance

**ADDRESS:** 1135 Hollins Street (Union Square Historic District)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Determination that 1135 Hollins Street is no longer a contributing building in the local historic district

**STAFF:** Walter W. Gallas, AICP

**APPLICANT:** Todd James

**OWNERS:** BWIRE Properties, LLC

#### **SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Union Square Historic District: The Union Square local historic district is a dense area of rowhouses and commercial structures located in Southwest Baltimore. Two major features define the district: Union Square Park, a donation to the city in the 1840s, and Hollins Market with the city's oldest market building. Generally bounded by South Schroeder, West Pratt, South Fulton, and West Baltimore Streets, the area of approximately 21 blocks is comprised of over 1,000 buildings. The district is built on a hierarchical street-grid system laid out over gently sloping terrain by engineer-surveyor Thomas H. Poppleton following the land's 1816 annexation to the city.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: 1135 Hollins Street is located on the south side of the Hollins Market between S. Carrollton Avenue and S. Carlton Street (*Image 1*). The building is one in a group of five two-story-with attic rowhouses (*Images 2 & 3*). 1135 Hollins is covered in gray Formstone. Its first and second floor windows and front door have arched brick lintels and brick sills. Brick steps are at the front door. It has a basement door hatch at the sidewalk. All of the front openings are missing as the result of a fire on October 16, 2018, which started in the house next door at 1133 Hollins Street (*Images 4 & 5*). Prior to the fire, 1135 Hollins had one-over-one windows at the first and second floor, and six-over-six windows in the attic (*Image 6*).

#### **BACKGROUND**

March 24, 1994 – Application to build/retain a rear yard structure for pigeons. No record of Notice to Proceed being issued.

August 8, 2017 – Commission approves via Consent Agenda rehab of building including constructing 3-story rear addition.

September 14, 2017 – Authorization to Proceed issued for CHAP-approved work. Construction not begun.

## **PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

The demolition of 1135 Hollins Street is requested by the owner/developer due to a fire on October 16, 2018.<sup>1</sup>

Staff applied Section 3.6 Demolition Procedures of the *Baltimore City Historic Preservation Rules and Regulations*, specifically “Demolition Hearing One—Determination of Architectural Significance.”

### **3.6 DEMOLITION HEARING ONE-DETERMINATION OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The first step in the demolition review process is a public hearing to determine if the building contributes to a local historic district or continues to meet standards for designation as a local landmark. At this hearing staff shall present the following:

1. The historical and/or architectural significance of the property;
2. The history of all structures on the property including the approximate dates of additions and significant alterations;
3. A determination of the historical and/or architectural significance of a structure’s additions, significant alterations, or ancillary buildings; and
4. Application of criteria for designation (see 2.1) to the structure in question.

A determination regarding the significance of the structure will be made prior to considering details of the demolition and hardship application, and any projects for new construction on the site. Doing so allows the Commission to determine the importance of the structure solely upon architectural and historical criteria. If a structure does not meet the criteria or contribute to the historic character of a local district, then an Authorization to Proceed for demolition shall be issued.

#### ***History/Architectural Significance—History of Structure***

1135 Hollins Street appears in the 1890 Sanborn map as it does today, one of five two-story-and-attic houses in the middle of the block between S. Carlton Street and S. Carrollton Avenue. Each of the small houses has a short one-story masonry el in the rear. 1135 has another small one-story wood addition attached to the el (*Image 7*). These houses have retained essentially the same size and footprint well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (*Image 8*). Due to its location immediate south of Hollins Market, the building went into some decline as noted by Phoebe Stanton in her *Poppleton Historic Study* of 1975 (*Image 9*).

## **2.2 CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS**

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<sup>1</sup> The fire originated at 1133 Hollins Street which, being without insurance, will likely go into receivership. Once new ownership is established, a demolition application for 1133 Hollins Street is anticipated as well.

...[T]he Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation will apply the following criteria in relation to the procedures for historic district and landmark designation....

### **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION**

The quality of significance in Baltimore history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, public interiors, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in Baltimore prehistory or history.

### ***Present Conditions and Application of Criteria for Designation***

Before the applicant was able to carry out approved plans to rehabilitate 1135 Hollins Street, a fire which had started in 1133 Hollins Street severely damaged the building on October 16, 2018. Staff visited the site immediately after the fire, and also in January (*Images 10-13*).

A structural condition assessment of 1135 Hollins Street submitted by the applicant states in part:

...The subject property was damaged by fire originating in 1133 Hollins Street. From our observations, it appears the fire breached the brick fire wall and burned the roof and all floors of the subject property... The fire damaged approximately 10% to 20% of the joist depth and width on impacted joists. Floor and sheathing was similarly impacted. Water damage was also evident and can be more deleterious to wood.

The basement is defined by single and multi-wythe brick masonry foundation walls. There are numerous areas where the brick masonry is unstable, spalled, missing bricks, and deteriorate (sic) mortar throughout. Basement floor is partial concrete and compacted in-situ soil.

We estimate 100% of the roof structure is beyond restoration and must be removed. It is our opinion that the existing wood floor structure is not suitable for re-use, due to fire and/or water damage or under-sized per

current code, and all wood framing must be completely removed... Foundation walls are unstable and must be rebuilt/repared prior to reconstructing the superstructure...(Images 14-19).<sup>2</sup>

Staff applied Criterion 3 in considering whether 1135 Hollins Street remains a contributing building in the historic district. Staff considered the conditions assessment of the structure as well. While the building has been a long-standing feature of the Hollins Market streetscape, and was an example of the modest two-story-and-attic style common in the Union Square, the fire damage was extensive enough to compromise many elements of the structure. Due to its condition, the building does not meet Criterion 3, and is no longer a contributing building in the Union Square historic district.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

The Union Square Association has been notified of the proposal and has no objection to the demolition application.

### **ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION**

CHAP staff finds that 1135 Hollins Street, due to its fire-damaged condition does not meet criteria for designation and is no longer a contributing building in the Union Square historic district.



**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

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<sup>2</sup> Correspondence and photographs from Jeff Blomgren, Principal, Engineering & Building | Due Diligence, Inc. to Todd James, War Horse Cities, January 15, 2019.

## MAP AND IMAGES

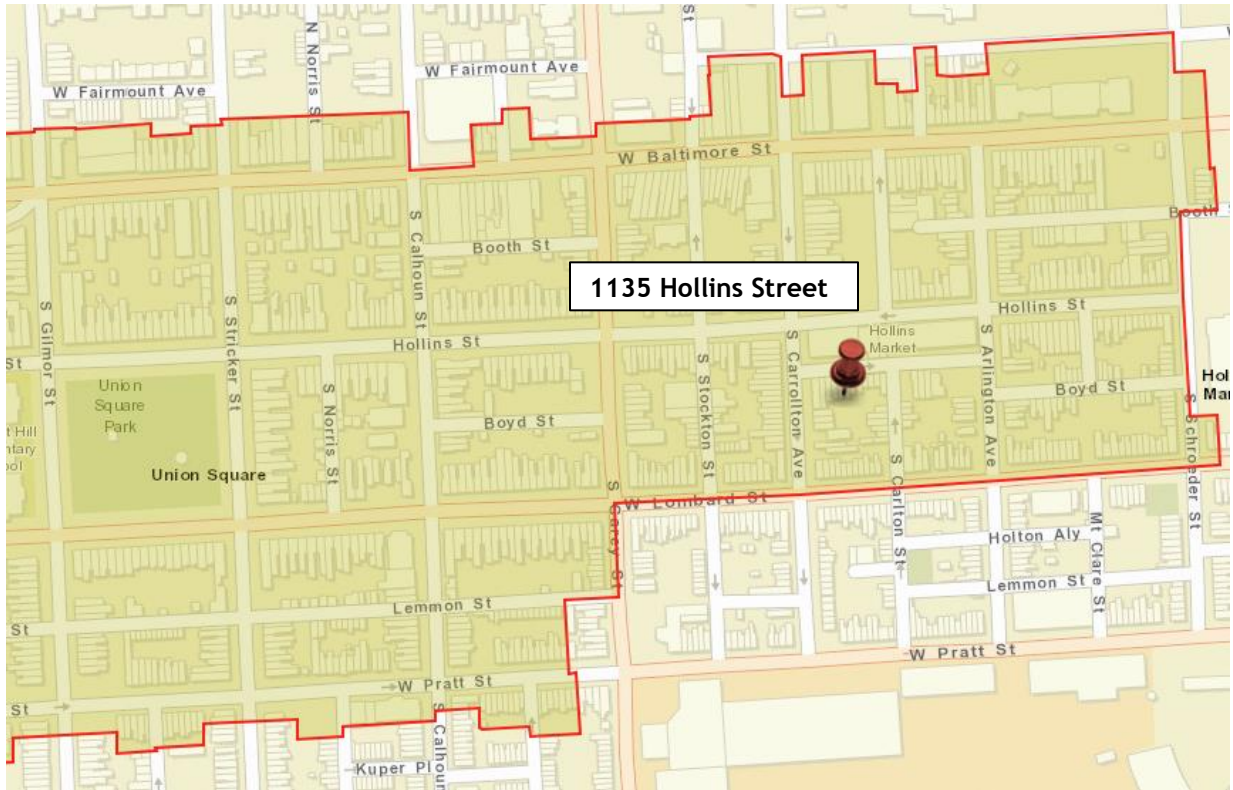


Image 1– 1135 Hollins Street in the Union Square Historic District



Image 2: Aerial view - 1135 Hollins Street from west, Dec. 22, 2017



*Image 3: Aerial view - 1135 Hollins Street from south, Dec.22, 2017*



*Image 4: 1135 Hollins Street, January 22, 2019*



Image 5: 1135 Hollins Street, January 22, 2019



Image 6: 1135 Hollins Street, Google Street View, July 2018

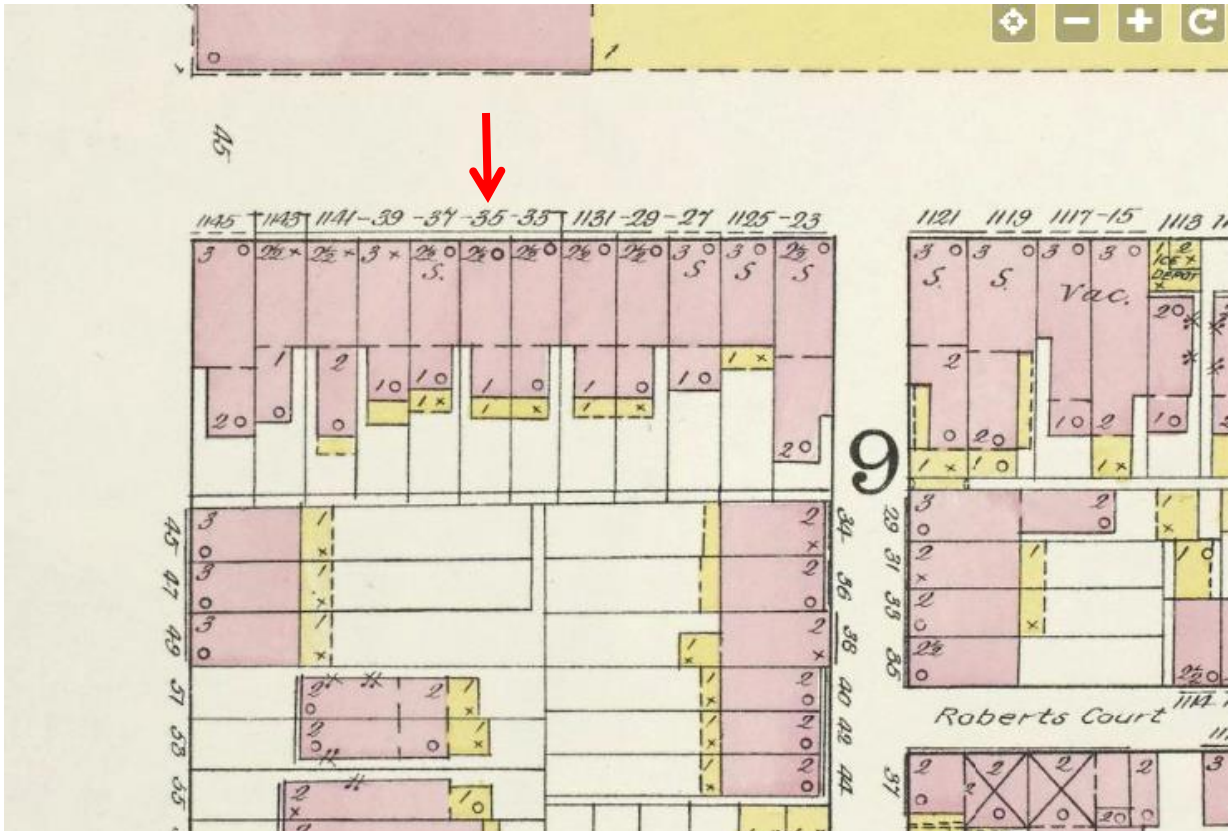


Image 7: 1890 Sanborn Map, 1135 Hollins Street

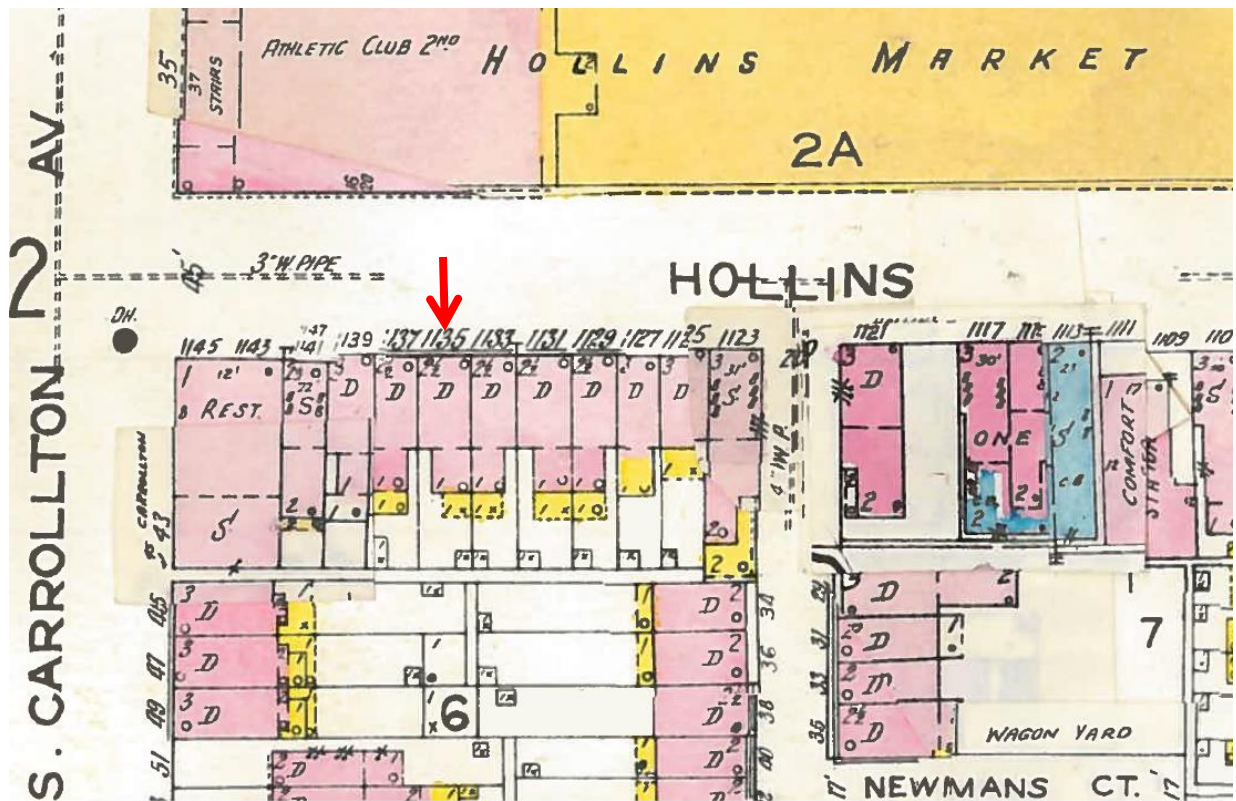
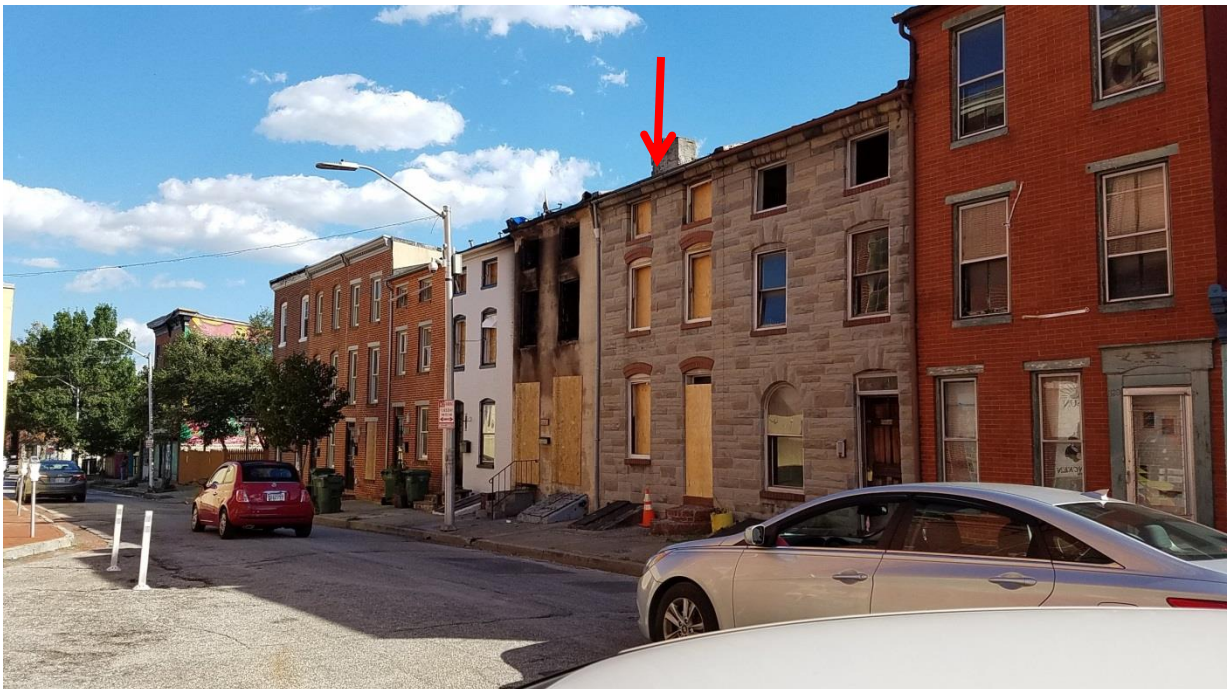


Image 8: 1952 Sanborn Map; 1971 updates, 1135 Hollins Street



*Image 9: 1135 Hollins Street, Poppleton Historic Survey, 1975*



*Image 10: 1135 Hollins Street, January 22, 2019*



*Image 11:* 1135 Hollins Street, January 22, 2019



*Image 12:* 1135 Hollins Street, January 22, 2019



*Image 13: 1135 Hollins Street- rear, January 22, 2019*



*Image 14:* 1135 Hollins Street, Roof damage and breach in fire wall, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence



*Image 15:* 1135 Hollins Street, 100% loss of roof structure, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence



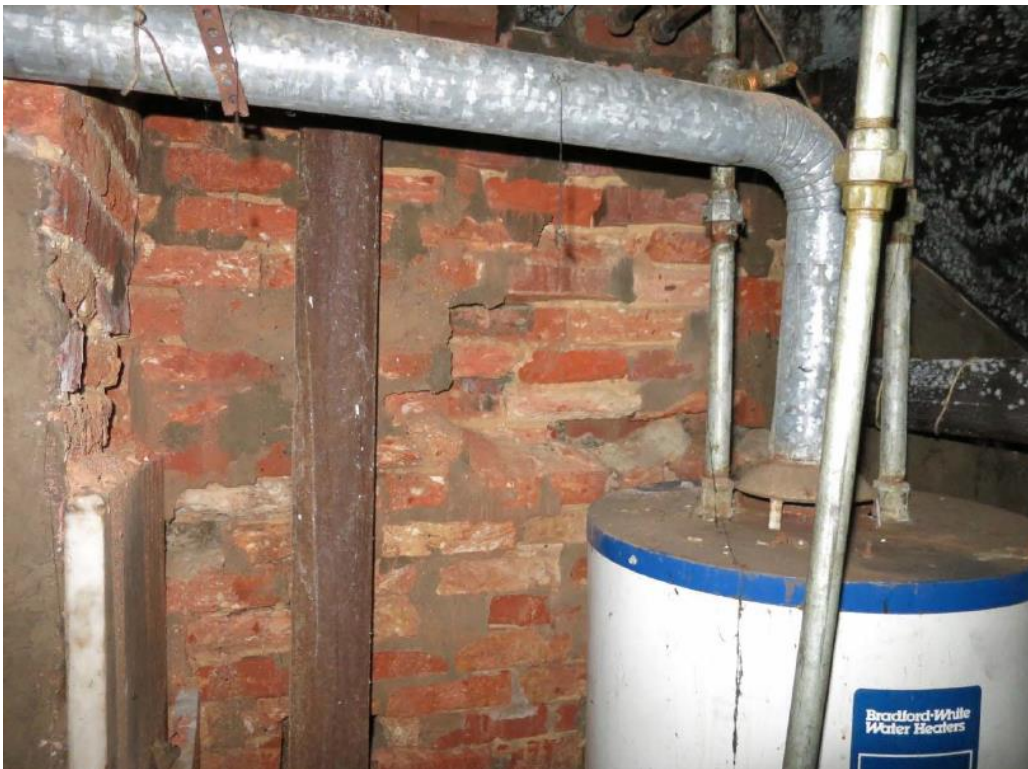
*Image 16:* 1135 Hollins Street, Roof beam with approximately 15% section loss, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence



*Image 17:* 1135 Hollins Street, First floor framing with extensive water damage, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence



*Image 18:* Unstable foundation walls with deteriorated masonry buttress/pier, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence



*Image 19:* Evidence of movement in foundation wall, deteriorated mortar prevalent, Engineering & Building, January 15, 2019, correspondence